

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 05474 190949Z

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2472

S E C R E T AMMAN 5474

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, JO, US, XF

SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH KING HUSSEIN'S INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

ADVISER

1. WE MET FOR SEVERAL HOURS SEPTEMBER 18 WITH ABD AL-MUNIM RIFAI, PRIME MINISTER'S UNCLE, AND LONGTIME PARTICIPANT FOR JORDAN IN INTER-ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS.

2. ON GENERAL SUBJECT OF MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS, RIFAI HAD THREE OR FOUR POINTS TO MAKE. HE WAS PRIMARILY PREOCCUPIED WITH QUESTION OF WHETHER JORDAN WOULD GO NEXT OR NOT IN NEGOTIATIONS. HE REPEATED ESSENTIALLY ARGUMENTS WHICH WE HAVE HEARD HERE BEFORE: (A) SYRIA WILL BACK OUT OF NEGOTIATIONS AND PERHAPS GO TO WAR IF EGYPT GOES NEXT, (B) U.S. SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE TENDENCY IN JORDAN ALSO TO OPT OUT ON NEGOTIATIONS, AND (C) IN LONG RUN EGYPT AND SYRIA HAD TO SUPPORT JORDAN IF THEY WISH TO SEE KEY WEST BANK QUESTION RESOLVED. ON (B) ABOVE, RIFAI ADDED THAT IN RECENT HIGH-LEVEL MEETING WHICH INCLUDED PRIME MINISTER, AND FIVE OR SIX OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND KNOWLEDGEABLE (WITH EXCEPTION OF KING), ALL EXCEPT ABD AL-MUNIM RIFAI WERE IN FAVOR OF OPTING OUT. PRIME MINISTER SUPPORTED OPTING OUT COURSE OF ACTION. ON (C), RIFAI ADDED THAT EVEN PLO SUPPORTS JORDANIAN NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL. IT'S THE ONLY POSSIBLE WAY THEY CAN GET BACK WEST BANK. OF COURSE THEY ARE PREPARED TO TRY TO TAKE IT BACK FROM JORDAN ONCE IT IS RETURNED BY ISRAEL.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 AMMAN 05474 190949Z

3. RIFAI SAID THAT FOR SOME PERIOD OF TIME HE HAS BEEN RECEIVING

MESSAGES THROUGH MUTUAL FRIENDS FROM ARAFAT. ARAFAT'S LINE HAS BEEN THAT WE CERTAINLY DON'T OPPOSE JORDAN NEGOTIATING WITH ISRAEL FOR RETURN OF TERRITORY, BUT PLO NEEDS TO HAVE AGREEMENT WITH JORDAN ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTERWARD. PLO FAVORS CONFEDERATION WITH JORDAN, BUT WOULD LIKE TO BE IN A POSITION TO MAKE UP ITS OWN MIND AFTER RETURN OF WEST BANK. RIFAI PLANS TO ATTEND CONFERENCE ON MIDDLE EAST IN BEIRUT SEPTEMBER 22 AT WHICH HE IS SPEAKER. CONFERENCE SPONSORED BY BEGIN UNDERLINE FINIAL TIMES OF LONDON. END UNDERLINE HE EXPECTS THAT ARAFAT WILL DIRECTLY AND PERSONALLY, OR THROUGH TRUSTED FRIENDS, ATTEMPT TO HOLD CONVERSATIONS WITH HIM. RIFAI SAYS HE DIFFERS WITH KING ON ONE POINT -- HE IS PREPARED TO MAKE SOME ARRANGEMENT WITH PLO ON WHAT SHOULD BE THE ARRANGEMENTS IN WEST BANK AFTER JORDAN NEGOTIATES THE RETURN. KING IS OPPOSED TO ANY SUBSTANTIVE GIVE ON THIS QUESTION, ACCORDING TO RIFAI.

4. ON ARAB SUMMIT, RIFAI INDICATED THAT KING IS NOW PREPARING FOR A "MAKE OR BREAK" SITUATION. KING WISHES TO HAVE A CLEAR, LOGICAL AND DETAILED DECISION REACHED BY SUMMIT ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JORDAN AND PLO VIS-A-VIS NEGOTIATIONS. KING HAS COMMISSIONED RIFAI AND OTHERS TO DRAFT A COMPREHENSIVE AND CLEAR STATEMENT OF JORDANIAN VIEWS AND POLICIES. RIFAI TENDS TO FEEL THAT SUMMIT WILL MAKE SOME PROGRESS TOWARD CLARIFYING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLO AND JORDAN. HE IN PARTICULAR HAS URGED JORDAN TO RESERVE ITS POSITION ON ATTENDING ANY PRE-CONFERENCE MEETINGS ARRANGED BY EGYPT AND OTHERS. BY THIS HE MEANS THAT JORDAN SHOULD SHIFT FROM AN OUTRIGHT REFUSAL TO ATTEND TO A WILLINGNESS TO DO SO. HE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN PERSUADING KING AND PRIME MINISTER IN THIS REGARD.

5. IN DISCUSSION ABOUT PALESTINIAN ISSUE AT UN, RIFAI SAID JORDANIAN DELEGATION TO RECENT ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL MEETING HAD BEEN PROMISED BY OTHER ARABS THAT ISSUE WOULD NOT BE USED TO IMPROVE POSITION OF PALESTINIANS AT EXPENSE OF JORDAN. RIFAI RECALLED THAT FAHMI HAD TOLD JORDANIANS OF HIS SUPPORT FOR THEIR INITIAL RESERVATIONS ON INSCRIPTION OF PALESTINIAN ITEM, AND LATER HAD REVERSED HIS POSITION IN HIS STATEMENTS TO ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL. THEY TENDED TO TREAT ARAB PROMISES IN MUCH THE SAME VEIN. HOWEVER, RIFAI HAS JUST HEARD FROM NEW YORK THAT IT IS MORE THAN LIKELY THAT PRIORITY WILL NOT BE ACCORDED TO PALESTINIAN ITEM.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 AMMAN 05474 190949Z

SHOULD THIS BE THE CASE, HE BELIEVES IT WILL BE REACHED IN UNGA ONLY AFTER ARAB SUMMIT IN LATE OCTOBER. SUMMIT QUITE POSSIBLY WOULD HAVE THEN RESOLVED SOME OF THE BASIC JORDANIAN-PLO DIFFERENCES. HE ASKED IN PARTICULAR THAT WE STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH ON PALESTINIAN ITEM BOTH IN AMMAN AND NEW YORK. TRADITIONALLY RIFAI DRAFTS INSTRUCTIONS FOR JORDANIAN DELEGATION AT UNGA ON THESE ITEMS. RIFAI IS CONVINCED THAT SOVIETS ARE LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR IDEA OF INSCRIBING PALESTINE ISSUE THIS YEAR AT UNGA

AND MANEUVERED PLO AND OTHER ARABS TO PRESS FOR THIS OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. HE BELIEVES THAT SOVIETS, WITH LIMITED MANEUVERING ROOM ON MIDDLE EAST, WOULD LIKE TO USE ITEM TO GAIN SOME LEVERAGE AND FURTHER ATTEMPT TO PLEASE PLO AND OTHER PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS.

6. ON JORDANIAN NEXT STEPS, RIFAI REPORTED THAT AT KING'S REQUEST AND AS RESULT OF KING'S VISIT TO JIDDA WHERE SAUDIS MADE SUGGESTION, HE AND BAHJAT TALHUNI CALLED IN ALGERIAN CHARGE. THEY EXPLAINED THAT JORDAN WISHED TO HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH BOUMEDIENE SHORTLY TO EXPLAIN ITS POSITION. THEY ASKED IF BOUMEDIENE WOULD CONSENT TO RECEIVE RIFAI AND TALHUNI BEFORE ARAB SUMMIT FOR THIS PURPOSE. ALGERIAN IS SEEKING POSITIVE RESPONSE.

7. DEPT. MAY WICH DISTRIBUTE TO ALGIERS, CAIRO, DAMASCUS, BEIRUT, TEL AVIV, USUN.  
PICKERING

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